

# Quail Hunting Prospects, 2010

## *Agriculture and Grassland Program Management Note 10-3*

### 2009-2010 Hunting Season

Our harvest estimates are based upon results from 2009-10 Illinois Hunter Harvest Survey. An estimated 16,948 hunters (down 22.8%) harvested 123,933 quail (down 18.0%). Those hunters that were afield last year experienced better daily success (up 13.5%) and better success throughout the season (up 6.3%).

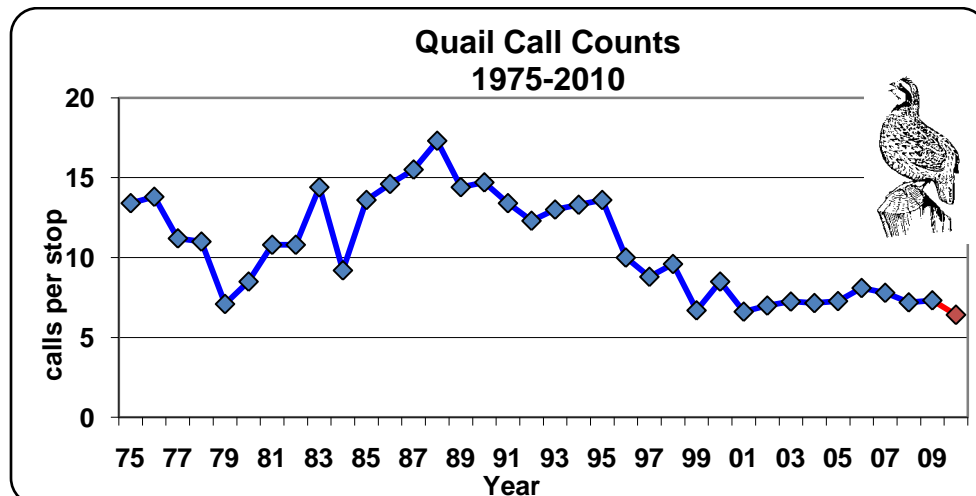
Table 1. Quail hunter participation and success 2003-2010.

Season	Harvest	Hunters	Average Quail/ Trip	Average Quail/ Season	Average Days/Season	Total Days Hunting
2003-04	204,236	30,044	1.15	6.8	5.91	177,617
2004-05	263,293	38,913	1.22	6.77	5.55	216,064
2005-06	244,521	29,983	1.44	8.16	5.67	170,108
2006-07	198,207	24,918	1.48	7.95	5.38	133,972
2007-08	188,710	24,614	1.34	7.67	5.74	141,227
2008-09	151,170	21,962	1.04	6.88	6.64	145,720
2009-10	123,933	16,948	1.18	7.31	6.21	105,220
Percent change from 2008-09	-18.0%	-22.8%	+13.5%	+6.3%	-6.6%	-27.8%

### Quail Population Indices

The IDNR Wildlife staff implemented a new survey technique in 2010 to better estimate bird density and response to habitat changes. Consequently, the data is difficult to compare with previous surveys. Fortunately, we are able to make some inferences from the results of the annual Breeding Bird Survey (BBS). BBS data was used to estimate survey trends this year. Statewide, BBS observers heard 3.5 (24.9%) fewer quail per stop than last year. The difference between the 2009 and 2010 surveys was not statistically significant.

Figure 2. Quail call counts 1975 - 2010.



## **Weather**

Last winter was Illinois' 19<sup>th</sup> coldest on record. It was 2 degrees colder than 2008-09. Snows were 10 inches above normal statewide, but only 2 inches above normal in southern Illinois.

This June was Illinois' second wettest on record. Although much of the state received record rainfall, southern Illinois received closer to normal rain amounts in June. It was dry and hot in July through much of the quail range. Temperatures during the nesting season were warmer (4.5 degrees) than last year. Parts of southern Illinois experienced drought conditions in July.

## **2010 Season Outlook**

It appears that quail numbers will be about the same or slightly less than last year. Quail production should have been good except for extremely wet areas or extremely dry areas. Hunters that have access to good habitat should have a good chance at a successful hunt.

## **Best Areas**

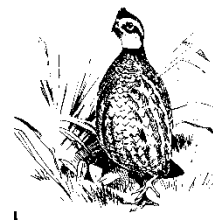
Look for farms with a good mix of row crops, small grains, legumes and grassland (excluding fescue and reed canary grass) well connected by wooded fencerows and forest edges. Though quail occur throughout the state, the most productive regions continue to be south-central and west-central Illinois. Based on average annual harvest from 1997 through 2002, some of the top counties are: Franklin, Perry, Wayne, Adams, Brown and Jersey.

**2010-2011 Season Dates:**     **November 6, 2010 – January 8, 2011 (North)**  
                                             **November 6, 2010 – January 15, 2011 (South)**

**Bag Limit:**                                 8

**Possession Limit:**                     20

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